



The Insider

www.senate.mi.gov/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

September 29, 2006

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a library near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See schedule for details.

Mickey's Blog: Fiddling While Rome Burns

The number one issue facing Michigan today is jobs. We are struggling through a tough economy, and people are hurting. We should be redoubling our efforts to create economic opportunity for our citizens, but many of my colleagues in the Michigan Legislature have different ideas about what is important.

Instead of focusing on jobs, my conservative colleagues concentrated on some social issues as their last accomplishments before the November elections. I must confess to having different priorities.

Three actions struck me as particularly misguided.

First, the Chairmen of both the House and the Senate Education Committees prevailed upon the State Board of Education to delay new Science Requirements for High School Graduation. The delay was granted so that conservative legislators can add "Intelligent Design" or "Creationism" to the teaching of Evolution.

I do not believe that politicians or religious leaders should determine what is taught in our Science Classes. We lack the expertise. We should not be teaching religion under the guise of Science. But the Board of Education bent to the wishes of the conservative chairmen, who believe their particular vision of God should be enshrined in the curriculum.

Secondly, the House passed HB 5633, to establish English as Michigan's Official Language, and a Senate Committee recommended it for passage by the full Senate. Thanks to the integrity of the Senate Majority Leader, we did not take the bill up before the election.

The bill is an empty gesture. English is the language of Michigan because 99 and 44 one-hundredths percent of Michiganders speak only English, not because the legislature passes some bill. The bill says that no one can be compelled to translate English into any other language, except where required to by law. We only found one Michigan Law that requires the government to publish information in another language, and that was to inform pregnant women of the dangers of abortion. I am sure conservatives

would not want to revoke that law, so making English the official language would have zero practical effect.

The bill is politically popular because it gives people a vague feeling that we are being tough on immigrants. But these same immigrants want to learn English. They beg us every year to fund English Language classes so they can learn to speak English and get a better job. If we really want to be tough on them, we should continue to cut the minimal funding we provide for these classes. Does that seem like a good way to ensure that people are more productive and stay off public assistance?

Finally, House Conservatives recycled an oldie—Drug Testing for Welfare Recipients. They passed HB 6481 almost two years to the date after they passed the same bill last time. By coincidence that also was just before the November elections. Once again the Senate Majority Leader did not take the bill up, and it will likely die a quiet death in December. But the issue is politically popular, and gathered media attention for a few days, and will likely appear in campaign literature. But just like its two predecessors in 2004 and 1999, it can never take effect because it is an unconstitutional violation of the 4th Amendment rules on illegal searches. The Federal Courts have already ruled so.

I will miss the Senate Majority Leader when he is gone. He is on the other side of the aisle and is very conservative, but he has great integrity. Unfortunately he is term limited out in December.

I hope the next person to hold the fiddle concentrates on jobs and not scoring cheap political points. What do you think? Let me know what you think and I will publish some of your responses in the next issue of the *Insider E-newsletter*.

Tax Breaks For The Ryder Cup

The Michigan Senate passed legislation on September 20, 2006 that would exempt the Professional Golf Association's (PGA) 2008 Championship Tournament to be held at Oakland Hills Country Club and the NCAA Final Four, scheduled for Ford Field in 2009, to be exempt from paying sales tax. Senate Bills 1372 and 1373 passed the Michigan Senate with a handful of nay votes, one of which was mine.

I voted against this two years ago for the Ryder Cup and I remained opposed today.

Normally when you give someone a tax break, it is to entice them to do something they might not do. The PGA and the NCAA are already committed to coming here. This is more like a giveaway of \$1 million. And Michigan isn't really in a position to be overly generous with tax receipts.

It also troubles me that the high rollers enjoying the good life in the corporate suites will be getting their overpriced golf shirts with PGA logos tax free, while the poor punter who plays at a municipal course every Sunday afternoon is expected to pay the full \$3.00 of sales tax for his golf shirt.

Tour golfers are multimillionaires and the PGA is doing rather well, thank you. They don't need a break in sales tax while we are dropping people from the Medicaid rolls. Just my thoughts.

Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Various Times
(Comcast Channel 18)

*Please note that Sterling Heights/Utica/Clinton Township will show the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 5 and Wide Open West Channel 10. Clinton Township will air the TV Insider Show at various times during the last week of every month. Roseville can see the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 18.

Coffee Hours

*Since my District Office is in Roseville, I do not have set coffee hours in Roseville. However, I encourage you to visit the Roseville office. We even have a coffee pot. Everyone is welcome to attend the coffee hours and discuss their issues and concerns.

October 2
7-9 p.m.

Location: Sterling Heights Public Library
(40255 Dodge Park)
Sterling Heights

October 30
7-9 p.m.

Location: Clinton-Macomb Public Library
(40900 Romeo Plank)
Clinton Township

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